

Hold Aid To Manila, Fascell Says

Congressional Rancor Over Election Grows

By Joanne Omang
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Rep. Dante B. Fascell (D-Fla.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, yesterday joined the growing chorus of influential members of Congress calling on President Reagan for decisive action to condemn election fraud and violence allegedly committed by the government of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos.

In a letter to Reagan, Fascell said Marcos "shoulders the direct responsibility" for "blatant manipulation and gross disregard for democratic principles" in the Feb. 7 election.

"Accordingly, I urge you to consider the immediate suspension of all military and economic assistance to the Philippines pending a full executive branch review of policy toward that country," Fascell wrote.

Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said in Salem, Ore., yesterday that even if certified as winner of the election, Marcos should resign. If Marcos remains in power he will have to declare martial law to avoid violence, Hatfield added.

The comments by Fascell and Hatfield were the most recent to join the American chorus condemning the election tactics and urging a vigorous U.S. response.

Strong statements Thursday by Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.), Senate Armed Services Committee ranking Democrat Sam Nunn (Ga.) and Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman David P. Durenberger (R-Minn.) appeared

to have triggered an even more widespread effort to move Reagan off the fence he has straddled since declaring Tuesday that fraud perhaps "was occurring on both sides" in the Philippines.

The bipartisan reaction to the fraud allegations reflects a consensus on the need for Philippine reform that was forged between Congress and the White House many months before the election.

That consensus, which included conservatives as well as liberals, was cited insistently to Marcos last year by administration officials, who urged him to curb corruption, reform his armed forces and restructure the Philippine economy in order to save his nation—and strategic U.S. military bases—from a communist insurgency.

Now, however, "everyone seems to be in agreement on the fraud except the White House," a key Republican Senate aide said.

Fascell also asked Reagan for "a firm and consistent policy toward the Philippines," adding, "your recent comments may have only had the effect of encouraging President Marcos to continue his manipulative efforts."

An aid suspension, Fascell continued, "is a prudent and necessary step in light of the inevitable damage the United States will suffer if it fails to distance itself from a regime which has obviously decided to stay in power regardless of the consequences of thwarting the democratic process and the will of the people."

Hatfield recommended that after Marcos is declared the winner by his legislative assembly—a decision expected imminently—he should name opposition vice presidential candidate Salvador Laurel to be his vice president.

"Marcos should then step aside and let Laurel take over with the understanding that Marcos would stand trial," Hatfield said.

There is no indication that Marcos, Laurel or opposition presidential candidate Corazon Aquino would accept any such offer.

Rep. Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) said "the election won't be over until the American president has voted." He urged Reagan to refuse recognition "to an election won through fraud and intimidation."

"There's a shift under way" in Congress, said Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa), ranking minority member of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Asian and Pacific affairs. "No one has played the American support issue more effectively than Marcos in the past, but the 20-year honeymoon is over."

He said the Reagan administration "should indicate that we stand behind our principles, which happen to be coincide with the aims of the democratic opposition" in the Philippines.

"I think we ought to be sending to Marcos today the same plane we sent last week to Baby Doc," Leach said, referring to the American jet that transported ousted Haitian dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier to France.